

COMPASSION

To all the

Sorrowful, Afflicted, Visited, Tempted,
Suffering Seed; whether inwardly or
outwardly in the City

OF

LONDON,

Or elsewhere in *England*.

Thus saith the Lord; say to them that are of a fearful heart: be strong, fear not: behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence: he will come and save you.

This is spoken unto you: whose Consciences are tender; having the deep Sence of Gods Judgments upon your Spirits: which are now upon the City of *London*, and other parts of this Isle. Whether upon your own persons or families, or as yet more remote from you: who wait upon the Lord in the way of his judgments; if possibly he may be intreated by you, to stop his hand from slaying the Righteous together with the wicked; and those who know not their right hand from their left. Yee know if his anger be kindled but a little, that blessed are all those who put their trust in him.

I know your griefs and am well acquainted with your sorrow: which are most of all, that yee your selves have not redeemed the time; as yee now see yee might have done: (although yee grieve to see others despise Gods Laws) in that for your time yee might have been teachers of others; yee have need to be taught the first prin-

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ciples of the teachings of God : as Repentance for your dead works, it being your daily burthen, that yee can feel no more life stirring in your hearts and services, nor no more faith towards God, to draw life and virtue from him; nor no more of the operations of his hands and openings thereof to fill you with his blessings : which makes yee doubt sometimes, whether yee are of the sheep of his pasture, or of the number of the flock of his hands : by reason of your leanness of soul and poverty of Spirit ; concluding in your selves ~~yee have not yet truly learned the Doctrine of Baptisms~~ : being yee find so much of self and the spirit of this world alive in you, and so little of the hay, straw, and stubble yet consumed and burnt up in you; that yee question many times, whether yee know the foundation of God laid in your hearts. And yee find daily so many temptations and vain thoughts lodge within you, to the disquieting and vexing of your Righteous souls : that yee fear the Baptisme of the holy Spirit is not yet attained by you : seeing your sorrows are so many, and your comforts so few and uncertain ; that yee know not certainly whether there be any such holy Spirit come into your hearts.

And for the Resurrection of the Dead and eternal judgment; yee fear that yee know little of them, more then yee have receiv'd by the hearing of the ear, and reading of the Letter without you: therefore yee doubt that your faith stands but in word and not in power ; because it removeth so little out of your hearts that stood there before, and giveth you no more victory over the world : but as yee were, so yee are still too much in bondage to it ; which is your grief. Although too long after victory is present with you; but how to attain and perform it continually over all things, both in words, thoughts and actions, yee find not. Yet yee cannot satisfie your selves with the common faith, *viz.* that such a state or condition is not attainable, but rather find cause enough in your selves to judge your own remissness and negligence in not watching in the Light; to keep your hearts with all diligence : experiencing that now your own folly doth correct you, because yee have often had precious seasons and opportunities; (as a daily prize) put into your hands; but yee improved them not as yee might have done. Nevertheless, yee dare not (like those whose foolish hearts are darkened) lay the fault upon God, as if the reason was, because he denied you power : never intending to make you perfectly holy, least your Salvation should be
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of your selves. But Experience hath taught you otherwise; in that when yee are at any time most holy and sanctified throughout in body, soul, and spirit; yee are then most meek and lowly, inheriting the presence and Kingdom of God in your hearts.

Further yee know there would be no variance or discord between the Lord and you, but for your defects in love to him and watchfulness to his counsel: from which causes flows, your miscarriages in life and conversation; and such darkness upon you, that yee cannot see the Salvation of God, crying out as undone; saying, we are cast out of thy sight, Oh Lord, wilt thou be merciful no more. And no marvel because yee know right well, that if the Lord be alwaies before you, yee cannot be moved.

Thus far I have traced you by the foot-steps of the flocks of the companions; although to you they seem as untrodden paths, and like the way of an Eagle, and as a Ship at Sea: yet be it known unto you the same steps have been trodden by the brethren that are in the World; as the way of the Lord to shew them what was in their hearts: like as he did to *Israel* of old.

O that I had the tongue of the learned, so as to shew you the causes of your diseased weaknesses; that a perfect cure might be received.

First of all I find your minds abroad, and your eyes gadding too much in the ends of the Earth, where yee find many wandering like your selves; which multitudes so infects your minds, as to strengthen your hands in this evil, and thereby to lessen it in your selves.

Also the wicked one so busieth you, in finding fault with others, (as if yee were to keep their Vineyards;) whereby he cunningly enticeth you to neglect your own, under pretence of service to them, or otherwise to fill your hearts so with prejudice against Religion it self, as if all men were liars: which thing lurking so secretly in your bosomes, that when the Winter cometh, and stormes arise it breedeth to fear and bondage; through the mixture of unbelief, carelessness, and lukewarm-indifferency: all which now appears to be a monstrous birth; although before nursed and dandled as a most beautiful Child, and so lawfully begotten as none so likely to inherit the Kingdom as it. But now yee see it is for judgment and must not be heir with the son of the freewoman.

Again as many by talking, what once they did possess and enjoy, have lost the sense and comfort of what they should have to support them at present; so others by speaking so much of suffering

are made unfit to suffer; and at this day how many are there: who have spent their precious time in often relating the cruel deaths and hardships of others, that they are neither prepared to die, nor fitted for trial themselves; and hence also ariseth the multitudes of their fears and troubles.

Another cause of your fear and trouble, I find to be the falling of many good and righteous people, in this common calamity: as if the Lord had no more respect to them that serve and fear him then to the wicked and profane; seeing what befalls the Swearer, befalls him that fears an Oath. But this comes to pass that none may presume; and that all may fear before him: yet the accuser of the Brethren wounds you so sorely on this account that yee daily feel his stings, by all tidings that comes to your ears: concerning the Lords visiting the Righteous with the wicked, and little Children in their innocency, with grown people in their sins: which thing as it doth much imbolden the ungodly in their presumption; so it doth discourage the weak in the faith, as if they served God for nought; not remembring that it is written, No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before him. And it is meet it should be so, because the love and hatred are to the two seeds of *Jacob* and *Esau* which are invisible: therefore, they that keep not to the light in the daily watchfulness through believing in it: but look out at things visible and temporal, such are unstable in all their wayes, and misinterpret all the Lords proceedings: whence ariseth such discontentedness of mind, and trouble of spirit; that they are ready to say with *Jonas*, they do well to be angry; (thinking they have cause enough for it) even unto death.

Thus doth the evil nature deal with the Lord, when it gets loose from the bit and bridle. But this is the Plague for people to die in their sins, as Christ said to the *Jewes*, (all must die) *but yee shall die in your sins.*

Yet hear O *Jacob*, and hearken O *Israel* that art afflicted, tossed with tempest and not comforted; the Lord will lay thy foundation as with precious stones, thou shalt be taught of the Lord, and in Righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear.

A farther cause of fear and trouble may be the natural temper and inclination of your minds and spirits, not yet knowing the seed of life so raised into Dominion in your Hearts, as to witness it stronger

stronger in you, then he that is in the world: therefore, yee lie open to the stormes and blasts of fear and distrust; notwithstanding the root of the matter may be in you, yet is it but as a seed sown in weakness, and as yet not raised in power. And by reason of this your natural temper, yee may labour more with your own hearts, then some others do, and yet not able to attain that victory and courage, which they arrive at: which makes you conclude the root of the matter is not in you, and that one day yee shall fall by the hand of *Saul*, & your fears do so attend you upon every approach of danger, as those that can do nothing of your own selves, and yet are able to do all things, through Christ strengthening of you. I know you well, that when yee are naked none so timorous, yee knowing self to be of no reputation: but when yee have girt on strength and sunk down into the armour of Light, none so bold and valiant, although thou be but a little one, thou art as *David*; not afraid of great *Goliath*, when into the name of the Lord thou art gotten. Feel me for I would not have you dismayed, because of this kind of fear: therefore be yee still, when yee feel it arise in you; look not at it: but keep your minds out of all compliance with it: and the just that lives by faith will spring in your hearts, suddenly daunting your fears and driving them back; whereby yee will witness the power of God to arise in you, by which through faith yee will be kept unto Salvation.

But in your journey it will fare with you as sometime with *Abaz*, unto whom the Lord said, ask thee a sign, when the enemies conspired against him: but *Abaz* said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord, &c. In like manner will yee find your souls compassed about with evils; some that yee are guilty of, through negligence, &c. and others laid to your charge by the accuser, as if because he tempted, yee had consented, and others also by him threatned, to come upon you, as a just reward for the former: yet in this very condition the Lord bids you believe in his Grace; that shall be sufficient for you in this great strait: but take heed at such a time, least like *Abaz* yee hastily reply, I will not, nor I cannot believe, neither will I tempt the Lord in presuming to be quiet and still through believing in his Light and power that secretly shews me my duty, and stirs me up unto it in my own breast, in this close besetting.

I say unto you, if yee will not now believe, (as in hope against hope) yee shall not be established. But on the contrary, if yee will believe in the Light, this great distress and sore besiege shall be unto you, as the

the death of *Lazarus* was unto *Martha* and *Mary*, concerning which Christ said he was glad (although they were troubled) in that it should be an advantage to their faith, whereby they saw the glory of God, in Christ raising him from the dead.

But I know yee are so overwhelmed with fears many times that yee cannot hearken nor be still, like the Children of *Israel* that could not hearken unto *Moses*, because of the anguish of their spirits: even so do your fears and unbelief indispose and unfit you for any service acceptable in Gods fight, whereby ye are ready to conclude your selves to be without amongst the fearful and unbelieving, &c. *Rev.* 21. 8, But I say unto you, that he who came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance: shall not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoaking flax; he it is that invites you, because yee are weary and heavy laden, and who ever comes to him he will in no wise cast off: for he comes to deliver those, who all their life time were subject to bondage by reason of the fear of Death. Therefore, take heed yee refuse not him that speaks from Heaven, who appears the second time unto them that look for him without sin unto Salvation, to set them free through believing in the truth, which God loves in your inward parts: which freedom in due time yee will reap, (Oh yee that have sown in tears) if yee faint not; and that yee may not faint, he hath provided a Cordial for you, and that near you, even the Spirit it self to help your infirmity, and to comfort you by bearing witness with your Spirits, that yee are the Lords: which above all things ye desire to know, and to have the full assurance of. The counsel of the Lord is unto you in this case to delight your selves in him, and hereby will you enjoy the desires of your hearts & through keeping his sayings, which yee will hear him daily saying in you, and unto you, as humble and meek in his Light yee abide and walk, and yee will easily know his voice, and his words to be Spirit and life, and that yee may be fully assured it is he, the works which he doth in you, and for you, bears witness of him. And by faith in him will he become an Inhabitant in you, for we are all the Children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; and by faith is he kept dwelling in your hearts, and hereby will yee know that yee know him, and have the full assurance of him, because the Son of God is come to give you this understanding by virtue of his being in you and yee in him, who is true God and eternal life.

I have now something to say to those *Fearful*; that are without amongst

mongst the unbelievers and abominable, murderers, and whoremongers and forcerers, and all liars who shall have their portion in the Lake: who cannot endure the Lamb, nor the presence of God when he steps upon the throne but flie to the Mountains and hills in which they have trusted to hide them in the day of Calamity. These are of *Cains* generation that are better at killing then sacrificing, and as the fruit of their doings they are alwayes afraid, & that where no fear is, even of every man (not knowing whom to trust) as *Cain* was; and although such hide their sin as *Adam* they shall not prosper. But of this sort I have something to say (more at large) by themselves, and so I pass them by at present.

Others there are who are yet without amongst the dogs, unto whom I intend not the Childrens bread before spoken of; And they are such who are alwayes learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth, to make them free from their fears, being laden with sin and led away with divers lusts; thinking an opinion of truth will save them, while they are crucifying afresh the Son of God and putting him to open shame: flying to Scripture sanctuary as the *Jews* did, who searcht the Scriptures but would not come to Christ, and in a wrong zeal, as the Disciples did; when they would have had those consumed that followed not with them, urging to Christ the example of *Elias*. But let these know that their fears flow from the guilt of sin that defiles their Consciences: which all the sacrifices that they offer day by day, can never take away, nor make the comers thereunto perfect: because they reach not the Conscience, but still there remains a conscience accusing for sin: because they believe not in the Light to walk in it; that the blood of Jesus might be known to sprinkle their hearts from an evil Conscience, that they may witness by it perfection as pertaining to the Conscience. Therefore, these are not free from affrighting, terrifying fears, because their sins remains, how confident soever they may seem to be of their eternal conditions, in that they know not the truth as it is in Jesus; for if they did it would make them free. Unto such I say, they are yet too high and wise for God, and therefore must come down to know a meek, poor and quiet spirit within them: which is of price beyond all their talk, knowledges and empty profession of Scriptures, God and Christ without them, while they have not learned to stand still so feel the spirit of Christ to be their strength & leader within them: these shall likewise perish and dye in their sins, if they bring not forth fruits

fruits meet for repentance; through that faith which is held in a pure Conscience;

But unto you whose hearts are tender, and Consciences awakened unto Righteousness; shall the Son of Righteousness arise with healing in his Wings: for yee love his present appearance in your hearts, and wait for the brightness of his coming to consume what ever is contrary to himself, that he may be and none besides him. Therefore, for your comfort I have this to assure you of, from my God and your God, that he will come quickly, and will not tarry, and yee know his reward is with him; because yee never enjoyed him but yee were sufficiently rewarded, for waking upon him.

And these clouds of sufferings, whether sickness, bands or banishment, are but as the evening which must be added to the morning to make up the last day (in which God will perfectly raise up his seed) as well as the first day. O sing thou barren, and thou that didst not bear; for now shalt thou be fruitful in Children, and they shall sing together as the sons of the morning of this blessed day, the new song which none can learn but the redeemed out of the Earth. Although now in the evening thou may be weeping by the Rivers of Babylon with thy Instrument unbound, because in a strange Land. Behold the Bridegroom cometh, at whose presence thy sorrow shall be turned into rejoicing, and thy joy shall none take from thee: But the World shall mourn; and now is the day of their sorrow begun, even that great and sore distress of Nations spoken of, with that unexpressible wo, wo, wo, upon the Inhabitants of the Earth: which hath been oftenkund through the Lords witness and servants, that it may be known there have been Prophets in England, and sounding in thy Streets O London. But who shall live when God doth this, besides the seed that shall serve the Lord.

Feel it already begin to arise in your hearts; (O all yee that fear the Lord) by all the oppositions it meets withal, and saying in you if this be to be vile to joyce at the return of the Glory of Israel, I will yet be more vile, and all the lookers on like *Michal* shall be ashamed when the Seed of *David* shall be exalted, over all to the praise of the glory of the name of its God for ever: Therefore thou Royal seed it is good for thee to draw near unto him: that when he takes peace from the Earth both within and without, that then thou may encourage thy self in the Lord thy God, who is over all blessed for evermore; Amen.

The 4th. of the 7th Month
1665.

This is from a sufferer with the Righteous seed, and one that prays and waits for its deliverance out of all its troubles in all where it yet groans for Redemption, a salutation of unfeigned love.

John Crook.

THE END.

